Washougal Woolen M
Only One of Its Kind
In State of Washington

The only mill of its type in the state of Washington and the biggest industry in Washougal is the Washougal Woolen Mills, another of Clark County's unique business establishments.

As much as 3,000,000 pounds of virgin wool a year is brought to the long time factory which has grown hand in hand with the Washougal community since 1912.

Cloth of Good Quality

The wool—much of which is sheared from the sheep of Washington and elsewhere in the Northwest—is transformed into igh quality, 100 per cent wool cloth which is sold to a variety of both men's and women's clothing manufacturers.

In 1953 there are 88 broad looms in operation at the Washougal factory with no sign of a let down. During 1952 the sales figure of the woolen mills reached the $4,000,000 mark, according to Charles K. Bishop, plant manager.

Employment at the factory runs bout 425, Bishop reports, though hat number varies slightly with the season.

Dates Well Back

Bishop is the great grandson of one of the pioneers of the woolen industry in the West, Thomas Kay. Bishop's grandfather, C. P. Bishop, is given credit for first bringing the firm to Washougal.

The Union Woolen Mills had been established in Washougal in 910 by two men named Churchill and Bailey who reportedly moved an already established mill from Union, Ore. That plant employed 35 persons.

The Bishop family leased the Union Woolen Mills operation in 1912 and manufactured various lines of bed blankets. In fact, manufacture of all of the goods put out by the Bishop's Pendleton plant was switched to Washougal except the Pendleton Indian goods.

In 1915 the Bishop family purchased the old Union mills site and incorporated the Washougal Woolen Mills of the present. The firm changed hands plant facilities were added for manufacture of the Pendleton goods.

Output Large

Since that early beginning the Washougal operation has grown steadily to the point of manufacturing about 1,250,000 square yards of finished wool cloth in 1952, plant officials revealed.

The plant at Washougal does not make blankets or any other finished products as in the earlier days. Main use of the all-wool material from the Clark County operation is clothing of all types.

Goods are shipped by rail and truck to Portland, Los Angeles and other West Coast clothes manufacturers and the textile centers of New York and New England on the East Coast.

Have Connection

Although the Washougal mills are operated as a separate corporation, they are connected indirectly through the Bishop family with the Pendleton Woolen Mills and garment factories in Portland and Omaha, Neb.

In 1920 the Vancouver Woolen Mills was incorporated for the manufacture of wool shirts and other wool garments after surplus equipment was brought from the Marysville Woolen Mills of Marysville, Calif., when it was dismantled. The Vancouver plant was moved to Portland in 1923, however, the same year a sales office opened up in that city.

Fire struck the Washougal mills in 1923, destroying about about half of the plant. In about six months the plant had been replaced by new buildings and machinery which was the most modern on the Pacific Coast. Those structures are still in use though additions and modernizations have taken place through the years.

The Washougal factory has played a part in times of emergency by making wool blankets for the military during both World Wars. It was during World War II that anything but wool cloth was made for the last time